



Massachusetts 2009 Summer Youth Employment Report

2009 AT A GLANCE

This report documents the Summer Youth Employment Program that operated in Massachusetts during the Summer of 2009. The summer was unusual because of the additional Recovery Act funds that were targeted for youth employment—which greatly increased the number of youth that could be employed even though the economy had fallen into a recession.

Because of the significant ramp-up necessary to administer these new funds, local and state officials became quickly engaged in large scale program operations. Commonwealth Corporation, on behalf of the Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, worked with local workforce investment boards and their youth councils, together with SYEP program operators and subcontractors, to support the implementation of a high-value summer program that offered quality work experience for participating youth.

We offer this Report not only to document the 2009 program, but to help inform program operations in future summer periods. Based on our conversations with program officials, worksite supervisors, youth, and others, we make the following observations and recommendations:

- ▶ **SYEP WORKED!** For the summer of 2009, all sixteen regional programs successfully ramped up in program size, built capacity for staffing, recruiting employers and worksites, ensuring proper worksite supervision, and in managing details of paychecks and data reporting. As a result, the state's summer jobs program found employment for almost 12,000 eligible youth.
- ▶ **YOUTH REPORTED SEVERAL MOTIVATIONS BEHIND HAVING A SUMMER JOB.** Our conversations with participating youth made clear the summer job was more than just a way to make money. Earning a wage was clearly a primary motivation, but youth were motivated in other ways—gaining skills or experience, being part of something bigger than themselves, contributing to the community, taking pride in their work, and being praised for their efforts.
- ▶ **YOUTH WANT TO WORK, AND WANT TO WORK MORE THAN WAS POSSIBLE THROUGH THE AVAILABLE PROGRAM RESOURCES.** In our surveys, youth reported that they wanted programs to provide more—more weeks, longer hours, more pay, more jobs, more students, employment that lasts through the school year, and some assurance that employment will be available next summer.
- ▶ **YOUTH HAD A HIGH RATE OF SUCCESS IN LEARNING WORK READINESS SKILLS.** For the 2009 SYEP program overall, 85 percent of youth participants learned work-readiness skills—86 percent of in-school youth and 81 percent of out-of-school youth
- ▶ **OPERATIONAL DECISIONS NEED TO BE MADE EARLY IN ORDER TO ENSURE A SYEP PROGRAM WORKS SMOOTHLY AND MEETS PARTICIPATION GOALS.** The workforce areas that were the most successful in avoiding frustration and delays appear to be those who recognized the need to ramp up capacity early and communicate program expectations very clearly with vendors and the public.
- ▶ **YOUTH AND THEIR FAMILIES BENEFIT FROM HAVING MORE SUPPORT IN UNDERSTANDING THE APPLICATION AND NECESSARY PAPERWORK.** The most effective administrative models appear to be workforce areas where the contracted youth service organizations provided some pre-processing of paperwork—working with youth and their parents to generate the required materials on behalf of the central staff who were actually determining youth eligibility.
- ▶ **THERE WAS A GREATER RELIANCE ON COMMUNITY SERVICE PLACEMENTS DURING 2009, BUT WE KNOW FAR LESS ABOUT THE QUALITY OF WORK EXPERIENCE IN THESE PLACEMENTS.** Based on discussions with local program operators, it does appear that the 2009 SYEP provided a larger share of placements in community service experiences than has been true in earlier summers. Such an approach provides a strong combination of case management and youth development activities that complement work experience. We recommend that program operators take special steps to ensure that program officials need to be very clear what the goals of an employment experience really are.
- ▶ **PROGRAM OFFICIALS SHOULD PAY MORE ATTENTION TO HOW YOUTH ARE RECRUITED FOR THE SUMMER PROGRAM.** Programs need to deploy more targeted recruitment efforts. Programs should deploy a variety of methods to recruit youth, since no one single method appeared to predominate. The strongest recruitment results come through places where youth are already connected—schools, case workers and outreach workers.
- ▶ **JOB READINESS AND SAFETY TRAINING NEEDS TO BE MORE TRANSPARENT.** Sixty-three percent of youth reported participating in job readiness training, 57 percent in job safety training, and 32 percent reported having training in child labor laws. We believe that a much higher percentage of summer youth actually received training in job readiness and job safety. We recommend that program officials in future summer programs make much more explicit the training and orientation sessions that are provided to youth, to ensure that appropriate learning actually happens.
- ▶ **YOUTH NEED HELP GAINING EMPLOYMENT AND WORK EXPERIENCE OUTSIDE OF THE SUMMER MONTHS.** Eighty-nine percent of youth reported that they want to work during the school year, but only 18 percent already had a job lined up. Fewer youth are able to find that all-important first job that helps build an experience base for later employment. The fact that only 18 percent of respondents had already lined up a job for the fall suggests the growing importance of year-round subsidized employment programs and other policies that organize access to jobs for youth who are pushed out of the labor market by older workers.

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2009 Summer Youth Employment

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It's money in your pocket...It's something new to do...It's a way to contribute to your neighborhood and your community...It's learning the discipline necessary to be more ready for future jobs...It's motivation for finishing a high school diploma...It's a way to move beyond the classroom and connect with adults in a new and different setting.



There are a hundred reasons why youth say they want a summer job. And there are just as many ways in which youth benefit from the work they perform.

Last summer, state and local officials across Massachusetts combined efforts to put almost 12,000 youth to work in the 2009 Summer Youth Employment Program. It was the largest youth jobs program in more than twenty years, and helped youth overcome the challenge of trying to find work during a grim economic recession.

This report reviews last summer's program—describing the makeup of the youth participants, the jobs they held and the skills they learned. We hear from the youth directly about what they liked about their jobs and how they thought about their work. Finally, we provide a program 'checklist' to help employers and program sponsors design high quality work experiences that help youth find value in that all-important first job.





“I think we gained a lot of
respect and I think we gave
a lot of respect.”

—A youth participant

Ford School Community Garden, Lynn, Massachusetts

Vegetables and herbs from neighborhood residents' native lands are grown at the Robert Ford School, in one of the poorest communities in Lynn, MA. Through the SYEP, a garden was established on the side of the Robert Ford School. Material, wood, and compost were donated. The high school plumbing department installed plumbing for 3 water cisterns that were used for watering the garden. Youth aged 16 to 18 were taught how to grow vegetables. The youth planted carrots, tomatoes, peppers, garlic, herbs, strawberries, lettuce, collard greens, and corn. Staff taught the kids how to compost and chop vegetables. The produce was given away to the neighbors and the neighborhood kept a watch on the garden to keep it safe. In collaboration with USDA, the youth were taught how to prepare and cook the vegetables they grew. Several youth commented that they prepared and ate vegetables that were completely new to them.



“This summer job changed me inside;
I don’t litter anymore and I worry

about global warming” said one youth
who worked this summer as a part of a
program known as the Green Brigade.”

— Youth Green Brigade Worker

Green Brigade, New Bedford, Massachusetts

PACCA (Positive Action Against Chemical Addiction) in collaboration with NorthStar Learning Centers created this summer project. The Green Brigade, composed of 25 youth, initiated a variety of environmental projects including community gardens, tree farming and recycling throughout New Bedford. The teens transformed a vacant lot with knee high grass and developed a community garden where they grew vegetables and flowers in raised beds. At the Gifts to Give site, the Green Brigade created murals to accent the 11 raised beds full of produce to be donated to a food pantry. They created a pumpkin patch that yielded 1,200 pumpkins, which were donated on October 24 at Make a Difference Day.



2009
Summer
Youth
Employment

“Maybe it will be a little bit easier to get a job now that we have the experience in something. Now that we have a couple of certifications and experience, maybe now we might get a job.”

— SYEP Participant

OVERVIEW 2009 SUMMER YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

During the Summer of 2009, 16 local workforce investment boards across Massachusetts administered almost \$20 million in state and federal funds to provide summer employment for youth aged 14–24. The majority of funding derived from the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA). Boards, working through their fiscal agents and contracted youth service providers, spent about \$16 million of the \$21 million in available ARRA funds to operate a summer jobs program for eligible youth. Across the state, ARRA provided youth wages and related program support that created 6,908 jobs for youth.

Beyond ARRA, the Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) was supported through regular youth program resources made available through Title I of the Workforce Investment Act. These funds, administered through local workforce boards, are the primary, on-going federal investment in low-income youth. A wide variety of youth services are supported with WIA resources—not just summer employment and work experience. For the Summer of 2009, WIA formula funds supported almost 700 jobs for youth. This level was lower than previous summers, since so much additional funds were available through ARRA.

SYEP also included more than \$6 million in state funds that workforce boards used to create 4,278 youth jobs through YouthWorks—a state-funded program that pays wages to low-income youth for summer jobs in the public, non-profit, and private sectors. Commonwealth Corporation administers this program on behalf of the Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development.

PROGRAM	# YOUTH JOBS ¹
WIA/ARRA (Federal)	6,807
WIA Title I Youth Program	698
YouthWorks (State)	4,224
Total	11,729

Together, the three sources of funding resulted in almost 12,000 jobs for eligible youth (*see table left*). Detailed youth employment results by region and by program appear in *Table One (see page 8)*.

ARRA provided a significant, one-time increase in the level of resources available to support subsidized employment for youth. Funding levels for a federal summer jobs program were the highest in almost two decades, with the result that workforce boards were able to provide employment to many more youth than normal. Most workforce areas normally operate a small summer jobs program using WIA formula funds. The additional ARRA resources allowed local programs to scale up dramatically. Administering these resources was a challenge because of delays in the issuance of federal

program guidelines and reporting requirements and the long-standing difficulty of obtaining documentation from youth and their families in order to prove eligibility for WIA services.

Although the effort was not without some administrative delays, the fact is that all sixteen regional program operators successfully ramped up in program size, built capacity for staffing, recruiting employers and worksites, ensuring proper worksite supervision, and in managing details of paychecks and data reporting. The state's summer jobs program found employment for almost 12,000 eligible youth. Many more youth went without jobs because they did not meet eligibility requirements, or did not meet the application deadlines, or—in some cases—local programs did not have sufficient financial resources to meet the demand from local youth.

The Importance of Teen Employment: Recent Data Trends

SYEP was launched in the context of dramatic shifts in teen employment over the past ten years. Massachusetts used to have a relatively high rate of youth employment—ranking eighth highest among all fifty states in the nation as recently as 1999.² Since 1999, the labor force participation rates of teens aged 16–19 have declined markedly, both in Massachusetts and nationally. The annual average teen participation rate in 2009 in Massachusetts was almost 27 percentage points below that of 1999.³ Over

the same period, youth employment rates in the nation fell 17 percentage points, from 52 percent to 34 percent. In 2009, Massachusetts ranked 24th among all states in the percent of teens who were employed.

This decline represents an extraordinary job deficit for teens, whose lack of work experience will hamper their future employability and wage growth, especially for those who do not enroll in four-year colleges and universities after high school graduation.⁴ Between December 2007 and January 2009, Massachusetts experienced the lowest teenage employment rate in the past 61 years for which data are available.⁵

¹ We have tried to maintain consistency in reporting the number of youth jobs supported in the 2009 SYEP program, but recognize that continual changes to records included in the two main data bases make it difficult to achieve absolute accuracy. Program operators are always updating records, removing duplicates, and managing both youth enrollments and exits. Minor variations in participant totals may exist.

² Andrew Sum, Ishwar Khatriwada, Joseph McLaughlin, et.al., *Summer Employment Rates For Massachusetts and U.S. Teens (16–19) Hit Historical New Lows Despite Teen Jobs Stimulus Programs*, Northeastern University—Center for Labor Market Studies (September 2009).

Employment rates of high school students varied widely across gender, age, race-ethnic and family income subgroups. The bulk of the decline is reflected in steep drops in labor force attachment among both in-school and out-of-school youth, especially high school students, dropouts, males, lower income youth, and minority youth. Male high school students were significantly less likely (by 8 percentage points) to be employed than their female counterparts. Both African-American and Hispanic students (by 12 percentage points) were significantly less likely to be working than white, non-Hispanic youth.

Certainly, some of the decline experienced in 2009 is related to the national recession. However, the consistent drop in teen employment over many years reflects a more fundamental shift in the larger labor market. More adults are holding jobs that teens used to depend on for either summer or school-year employment. Fewer private sector employers are willing to hire workers, even for summer jobs, if they are less than 18 years old. Jobs in retail trade, restaurants, and tourism are relatively more available in suburban locations—far out of reach of many urban youth.

Funding SYEP

During the Summer of 2009, statewide program expenditures for SYEP totaled \$24 million, with about \$16 million of this amount paid directly to youth in wages. SYEP program funds were made available from three primary sources:

- ▶ **WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACT TITLE I YOUTH FUNDS (WIA)**—the federal WIA Youth program provides funds through local workforce boards, to provide a variety of services to eligible low income youth. The WIA Youth program is a year-round effort, and boards (working through contracted youth-serving organizations) deliver a customized mix of services as appropriate for each participating youth. Work experience is one of the services that is available, and is used as the basis for supporting summer employment experiences. Under WIA, summer employment must be directly linked to academic and occupational learning.
- ▶ **AMERICAN RECOVERY AND REINVESTMENT ACT FUNDS**, appropriated by congress as a supplement to the WIA Title I Youth program. ARRA is the national economic stimulus package passed by congress on February 13, 2009, and signed into law by President Obama on February 17, 2009. About \$16 million was expended to support summer jobs during 2009. ARRA youth funding was awarded as additional funding under the Workforce Investment Act. As such, ARRA programs were subject to the same laws, regulations, administrative and program requirements as WIA Title I Youth program funds.

- ▶ **YOUTHWORKS**. About \$6.6 million in funds for summer youth employment came from a line item in the Commonwealth's FY09 budget (Line Item No. 7002-0012). Funds were targeted to the 25 cities and towns in Massachusetts that have the greatest incidence of juvenile detention and adjudication, where low-income youth are especially in need of ensuring access to summer job opportunities. YouthWorks grants are also awarded to local workforce boards, who then subcontract administration to program operators and youth-serving organizations.⁶

Communities have other funds and program resources available that help to increase the size, reach, and quality of summer employment. Many cities supplement state and federal program awards with local public funding. Thousands of employers hire local youth program participants, and other state resources such as Connecting Activities help program operators recruit employers and ensure that worksite placements help youth learn valuable skills.

The Commonwealth required boards to submit a youth business plan, outlining the strategies, goals, policies and establishing expenditure milestones for ARRA funds. The Commonwealth further required LWIBs to spend a minimum of 60 percent of its ARRA allocations for the 2009 SYEP program. All boards met the state's minimum expenditure requirement. In fact, boards expended about 75% of ARRA allocations for SYEP – about \$16 million statewide.

Table Two shows the total expenditures made by each workforce board for the SYEP program, for each of the three major funding streams.

Program Operations: Youth Eligibility

Each funding source for SYEP was targeted to a different cohort of youth. For example:

- ▶ WIA resources are available to youth aged 14–21 years who live in families whose income was below the federal poverty level, about \$25,000 per year for a family of four. In addition to age and income qualification, WIA youth had to meet an additional 'barrier' in order to qualify to participate in the program. These barriers include such conditions as having low basic skills, being a school dropout, homeless or a foster child, or involvement in the juvenile justice system.
- ▶ ARRA funds were administered using the same eligibility criteria as WIA Title I Youth, except that ARRA expanded the program to youth aged 22–24.
- ▶ For 2009, YouthWorks income eligibility was broadened to youth from households whose income did not exceed 200% of the federal poverty level.

³ Commonwealth Corporation, *The Declining Teen Labor Force* (Research and Evaluation Brief, Vol. 4 Issue 9: May 2007).

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Andrew Sum, Ishwar Khatiwada, Joseph McLaughlin, et.al., *Demographic, Socioeconomic, School and labor Market Outcomes for 16–24 Year Olds in Massachusetts in 2005–2007*, Prepared for Commonwealth Corporation, March 2009.

⁶ Program details about YouthWorks are published in a separate report. See *YouthWorks 2009 Data Book*, Commonwealth Corporation, March 2010.

Table One. 2009 SYEP Youth Participant Totals by Region and by Program

LOCAL WORKFORCE INVESTMENT AREA	WIA FORMULA	ARRA	YOUTHWORKS	TOTAL
Berkshire County	4	65	45	114
Boston	13	880	1,685	2,578
Bristol County	15	714	219	948
Brockton Area	6	129	127	262
Cape Cod & Islands	19	234	—	253
Central Mass	17	530	421	968
Franklin/Hampshire	41	289	—	330
Greater Lowell	65	365	164	594
Greater New Bedford	146	418	173	737
Hampden County	215	998	576	1,789
Lower Merrimack Valley	12	502	187	701
Metro North	44	521	300	865
Metro South West	1	145	42	188
North Central Mass	64	422	111	597
North Shore	17	333	153	503
South Shore	19	262	75	356
Statewide Totals	698	6,807	4,278	11,78

Table Two. SYEP Program Expenditures by Region, 2009

WORKFORCE REGION	ARRA EXPENDITURES	YOUTHWORKS ALLOCATIONS	TOTAL PROGRAM FUNDS
Berkshire County	\$192,274	\$86,709	\$278,983
Boston	\$1,381,022	\$2,536,500	\$3,917,522
Bristol County	\$2,002,635	\$307,817	\$2,310,452
Brockton Area	\$327,793	\$222,347	\$550,140
Cape & Islands	\$678,071	—	\$678,071
Central Mass	\$1,545,078	\$628,641	\$2,173,719
Franklin/Hampshire	\$825,878	—	\$825,878
Greater Lowell	\$550,586	\$307,198	\$857,784
Greater New Bedford	\$1,540,752	\$281,185	\$1,821,937
Hampden County	\$1,869,130	\$904,871	\$2,774,001
Lower Merrimack	\$1,272,600	\$397,004	\$1,669,604
Metro North	\$1,218,306	\$340,643	\$1,558,949
Metro South/West	\$400,000	\$77,419	\$477,419
North Central	\$969,218	\$187,663	\$1,156,881
North Shore	\$549,538	\$281,185	\$830,723
South Shore	\$723,000	\$115,819	\$838,819
Statewide Totals	\$16,045,880	\$6,675,000	\$22,720,880

Note: We did not count expenditures made using WIA Title I formula funds, since the amount of that resource used in SYEP was not separately tracked.

Local program operators welcomed the expanded scope of eligibility, since it gave them additional options for serving youth—programs were able to match each youth applicant with a funding source that provided the best fit.

In practice, the procedures required for documenting income eligibility for WIA and ARRA youth created serious challenges for program administrators. In order to prove eligibility for WIA services, youth are required to provide extensive evidence documenting their family's low income—including such things as tax returns, several month's worth of paycheck stubs and other highly personal information. WIA administrators are not permitted much latitude in documentation, and can't offer many shortcuts to youth. As a result, the process of documentation has proved somewhat of a barrier. Some families do not want to share such information, and many youth simply give up during the application process rather than keep bringing in required paperwork. Income documentation has long been a trouble spot for WIA youth programming.

In the context of the 2009 SYEP, local program operators successfully processed eligibility for a dramatically increased number of youth—enough to meet overall participation goals. However, the process was not uniformly smooth across the state. Some regions did not staff up with sufficient additional intake and eligibility staff early enough in the program period to determine eligibility prior to the program's starting date. In these communities, youth did not begin their summer employment until two or more weeks after the anticipated start date, leading to disappointment for the youth and confusion for the employers. In other communities, income requirements and the paperwork processing steps had not been clearly communicated to youth, families, program officials and employers. Many people developed high expectations for employment because they knew of the large new pool of Recovery Act funds. Facing a particularly bleak job market, many youth believed that their only hope for a summer job was linked to these publically-funded jobs programs. These youth, and their parents, were let down when they couldn't produce income verification, or found that their family income was too high to qualify, or qualified for a job that started late because of administrative delays.

The workforce areas that were the most successful in avoiding frustration and delays appear to be those who recognized the need to ramp up capacity early and communicate program expectations very clearly with vendors and the public. Some program operators made temporary reassignments of staff to meet the processing demand, or staffed up with temporary eligibility clerks who were trained and ready for managing applications.

The most effective administrative models appear to be workforce areas where the contracted youth service organizations provided some pre-processing of paperwork – working with youth and their parents to generate the required materials on behalf of the central staff who were actually determining youth eligibility. In these communities, vendors and program operators were on the same page regarding application requirements. The organizations that had the closest connection with youth participants

served as an intermediary to both manage expectations of youth and help communicate the need to provide appropriate documents.

Terms and Types of Employment

SYEP typically offered six to seven weeks of employment, starting in early July and ending in late August, at minimum wage (\$8.00 per hour) for about thirty hours each week. With these characteristics, a participating youth could earn about \$1,500 during the summer. Individual jobs varied from this typical term: some jobs lasted for eight weeks or more—even extending employment into the fall; some were really full-time jobs, with youth working up to forty hours each week.

In almost every employment situation, the actual job was preceded by paid orientation and work readiness activities. That is, youth were compensated for the time they spent in workshops and introductory experiences, including health and safety training, learning self-advocacy, career readiness, and workplace professionalism that were tied to an overall work readiness curriculum. Since SYEP represented the first job for many youth, this was the first opportunity to expose a large cohort of youth to work readiness training.

Depending on the type of program they were enrolled in, youth experienced a wide variety in types of employment placements. Some – fewer than 10 percent – held jobs with private sector employers, most often in retail, food service, and health care. The majority of youth held jobs in the public or non-profit sectors – placements in city agencies and departments, or community-based organizations. SYEP jobs in 2009 appeared to follow a similar employment profile that has appeared in prior summer programs. Youth hold jobs in public works, landscaping around schools, public parks, playgrounds and cemeteries. Other common jobs included serving as a camp counselor or child care worker – both jobs that enable opportunities for younger youth. For example, many city departments of parks and recreation (as well as community-based organizations) operate a day camp for elementary and middle-school aged youth. Employing teen camp counselors funded by SYEP helps staff the recreation program, enabling enrollment of thousands of elementary-aged youth in camp activities.

Specific data on employment placements was not reported by program operators, so we cannot present information on the actual profile of SYEP placements. Based on discussions with local program operators, it does appear that the 2009 SYEP provided a larger share of placements in community service experiences than has been true in earlier summers. In this type of program model, a youth-serving organization such as a Boys and Girls Club or a local YMCA, serves as a subcontractor to a workforce board, 'employing' 25 or more eligible youth. The youth organization focuses on building coordinated strategies that promote work readiness, career preparation, academic enrichment and postsecondary exposure. Service learning itself is a teaching and learning strategy in which students address real-world issues,

problems and needs within the local community. Youth explore these issues through research, reflection, and development of service learning projects, as well as through direct service and/or advocacy. The overall program provides a strong delivery of case management and youth development activities to complement an employment placement.

From the perspective of a local workforce board, these service learning arrangements have the dual benefit of quickly meeting quota for job slots while offering youth participants an integrated mix of youth development services. The trade-off, if any, is that community service placements may not have the same level of rigor as would be available in an actual employment experience. Program officials need to be very clear what the goals of an employment experience really are. Some, especially younger youth, benefit greatly from work readiness, academic enrichment and simulated worksite experience. Others, especially older youth who may have already had some other employment, benefit from their participation in a work setting that is highly structured, with clear direction from a worksite supervisor. Both program approaches have value.

Demographic Snapshot of Youth Participants

Recent policy papers point to the challenges that young people in Massachusetts face in finding summer employment. In recent years, the traditional ‘teen labor market’ has contracted as more seasonal jobs and jobs normally held by youth are being filled by adults. In addition, the deep national recession reduced the over-

all number of jobs available. Labor market data also demonstrates that lower income, and African-American or Hispanic youth are far less likely to find a job than other youth.

In the Summer of 2009, the Massachusetts Summer Youth Employment Program helped many income-eligible youth find a job. [Table Three](#) and [Table Four](#) display the age profile and ethnicity profile of youth participants for YouthWorks, WIA formula, and ARRA/WIA program. All three programs served a majority of youth aged 16–18 years. A higher percentage of WIA and ARRA/WIA participants were older—probably because the underlying WIA statutes require workforce boards to spend at least 30 percent of available funds on out-of-school youth, which tends to include older youth.

The ethnicity profile of youth participants in YouthWorks is readily contrasted with that of WIA and ARRA/WIA youth. White youth comprised 38 percent of ARRA and 34 percent of the WIA summer program, but only 14 percent of employment funded through YouthWorks. Forty-four percent of YouthWorks participants were African-American youth, compared to only 22 percent in ARRA. We believe the differences are likely related to the fact that YouthWorks funding is used in the 25 largest communities in Massachusetts (where there is a higher concentration of minority youth), while ARRA and WIA is a statewide program, available in ex-urban and rural parts of the state (which tend to have a higher share of white youth). All three program funds yielded a higher share of Hispanic / Latino youth than their population within the larger youth cohort – about 35 percent of all SYEP participants were identified as Hispanic.

In addition, we note that a very high percentage of ARRA SYEP participants consisted of youth with disabilities. Program operators reported 2,289 youth with disabilities were served

Table Three. Massachusetts 2009 SYEP—Age Profile of Participants by Program

SYEP FUNDING SOURCE	AGE COHORT OF YOUTH PARTICIPANTS				TOTAL
	14–15	16–18	19–21	22–24	
ARRA	1,773 26%	3,586 53%	1,110 16%	308 5%	6,777
WIA FORMULA	170 24%	434 61%	102 14%	—	706
YOUTHWORKS	711 19%	2,546 69%	409 11%	—	3,666
Total	2,654 24%	6,566 59%	1,621 15%	308 3%	11,149

Note: Data displayed in these tables may not equal totals in other tables. The number of youth for whom our database shows an age classification may differ from the actual counts of youth participants.

using ARRA funds, about one-third of all youth in SYEP. (In contrast, only about 17 percent of all students enrolled in K–12 schools are special needs youth) This high percentage is likely related to the fact that a youth who has a disability is easier to enroll in WIA because he/she is considered a ‘family of one’ for purposes of the income requirements – meaning that only the youth’s income is documented rather than that of his/her whole family. In practice, many LWIBs have developed relationships with local school districts, especially with school departments that serve special needs youth. Between these relationships and the easier income standard, youth with disabilities are overrepresented in WIA and ARRA services.

A full table showing detailed demographic data by region for ARRA youth appears in *Table Five* (see page 12).

To better understand the reach of SYEP, there were about 650,000 youth aged 14–21 in Massachusetts, according to the Census 2000. Of these youth, about 130,000 lived in households where the income either fell below poverty or ‘less than 70 percent of the federal lower-level income.’ Thus, despite its impressive scale, SYEP reached less than 10 percent of potentially-eligible youth, and could not affect almost 500,000 youth who face real employment barriers in facing a challenging economy.

Performance Outcomes for SYEP

U.S. Department of Labor dramatically changed the regulatory framework for program performance for summer employment under the Recovery Act. Normally, programs funded under the Workforce Investment Act must comply with seven specific statutory performance measures – three for younger youth and

four for older youth. For example, WIA measures the percent of younger youth participants who attain basic, work readiness, or occupational skills, or who attain a high school diploma (or GED) while receiving WIA-funded youth services.

Under program regulations issued for ARRA, the ONLY performance measure required for summer employment is the percent of youth participants, regardless of age, who earned a work readiness skill. These skills, listed in the box on page 14, represent foundational skills that all youth need to get and keep a job. In order to be identified as having attained the work readiness measure, each participating youth must be assessed for skill attainment by a program or workplace supervisor. In Massachusetts, we aligned the fifteen work readiness skills with the Massachusetts Work-Based Learning Plan, a program resource that helps structure and guide workplace learning. Successful assessment for any of the fifteen skills is sufficient to earn a positive performance.

For the 2009 SYEP program overall, 85 percent of youth participants earned a work readiness skill credential—86 percent of in-school youth and 81 percent of out-of-school youth. Performance varied by region, with a high of 100 percent among Brockton’s out-of-school youth to 50 percent for youth in Lower Merrimack Valley. Program performance by region appears in *Figure One* (see page 13).

Positive Response from Youth

Over the summer, staff from Commonwealth Corporation conducted a variety of site visits with workforce boards, program operators, and at youth worksites. We wanted to ensure that local

Table Four. Massachusetts 2009 SYEP—Ethnicity Profile of Participants by Program

SYEP FUNDING SOURCE	ETHNICITY OF YOUTH PARTICIPANTS						TOTAL
	African-American	Asian	Hispanic	Native American	White	Other	
ARRA	1,417	223	2,347	56	2,492	12	6,547
	22%	3%	36%	1%	38%	0.02%	
WIA FORMULA	108	24	296	4	239	40	711
	15%	3%	42%	0.06%	34%	6%	
YOUTHWORKS	1,856	272	1,331	15	603	129	4,206
	44%	6%	32%	0.03%	14%	3%	
Total	3,381	519	3,974	75	3,334	181	11,464
	29%	5%	35%	0.1%	29%	2%	

Note: Data displayed in these tables may not equal totals in other tables. The number of youth for whom our database shows an age classification may differ from the actual counts of youth participants.

Table Five. 2009 SYEP ARRA Youth Participants by Region and Demographic Characteristics

LOCAL WORKFORCE AREA	AGE COHORT			GENDER		RACE / ETHNICITY					TOTAL ENROLLMENTS			
	14-18	19-21	22-24	FEMALE	MALE	HISPANIC	WHITE	AFRICAN-AMERICAN	NATIVE-AMERICAN	ASIAN	PACIFIC ISLANDER	OTHER		
Berkshire County	50 76.9%	12 18.5%	3 4.6%	29 44.6%	36 55.4%	3 4.6%	52 80.0%	10 15.4%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	1 1.5%	65	
Boston	709 80.6%	139 15.8%	32 3.6%	453 51.5%	427 48.5%	272 30.9%	73 8.3%	404 45.9%	4 0.5%	32 3.6%	2 0.2%	44 5.0%	880	
Bristol County	586 66.6%	107 12.2%	21 2.4%	309 35.1%	405 46.0%	115 13.1%	423 48.1%	116 13.2%	7 0.8%	40 4.5%	1 0.1%	33 3.8%	714	
Brockton Area	111 86.0%	16 12.4%	2 1.6%	45 34.9%	84 65.1%	6 4.7%	60 46.5%	26 20.2%	1 0.8%	0 0.0%	1 0.8%	36 27.9%	129	
Cape Cod & Islands	204 87.2%	20 8.5%	10 4.3%	103 44.0%	131 56.0%	18 7.7%	176 75.2%	33 14.1%	17 7.3%	2 0.9%	1 0.4%	8 3.4%	234	
Central Mass	383 72.3%	116 21.9%	31 5.8%	240 45.3%	290 54.7%	213 40.2%	213 40.2%	89 16.8%	3 0.6%	10 1.9%	0 0.0%	11 2.1%	530	
Franklin/Hampshire	241 83.4%	33 11.4%	15 5.2%	141 48.8%	148 51.2%	66 22.8%	191 66.1%	35 12.1%	6 2.1%	6 2.1%	0 0.0%	6 2.1%	289	
Greater Lowell	276 75.6%	65 17.8%	24 6.6%	163 44.7%	202 55.3%	140 38.4%	157 43.0%	19 5.2%	1 0.3%	44 12.1%	0 0.0%	5 1.4%	365	
Greater New Bedford	348 83.3%	55 13.2%	15 3.6%	185 44.3%	233 55.7%	132 31.6%	152 36.4%	65 15.6%	6 1.4%	0 0.0%	1 0.2%	66 15.8%	418	
Hampden County	733 73.4%	189 18.9%	76 7.6%	508 50.9%	490 49.1%	550 55.1%	145 14.5%	289 29.0%	3 0.3%	10 1.0%	0 0.0%	4 0.4%	998	
Lower Merrimack Valley	457 79.9%	92 16.1%	23 4.0%	248 43.4%	324 56.6%	392 68.5%	137 24.0%	28 4.9%	1 0.2%	4 0.7%	0 0.0%	7 1.2%	572	
Metro North	435 83.5%	71 13.6%	15 2.9%	226 43.4%	295 56.6%	160 30.7%	219 42.0%	122 23.4%	6 1.2%	9 1.7%	3 0.6%	24 4.6%	521	
Metro South West	100 69.0%	28 19.3%	17 11.7%	72 49.7%	73 50.3%	49 33.8%	71 49.0%	23 15.9%	0 0.0%	2 1.4%	0 0.0%	2 1.4%	145	
North Central Mass	362 85.8%	53 12.6%	7 1.7%	216 51.2%	206 48.8%	157 37.2%	202 47.9%	61 14.5%	0 0.0%	17 4.0%	1 0.2%	1 0.2%	422	
North Shore	265 79.6%	54 16.2%	14 4.2%	140 42.0%	193 58.0%	138 41.4%	125 37.5%	58 17.4%	0 0.0%	8 2.4%	0 0.0%	11 3.3%	333	
South Shore	202 77.1%	55 21.0%	5 1.9%	79 30.2%	183 69.8%	9 3.4%	116 44.3%	37 14.1%	1 0.4%	44 16.8%	2 0.8%	3 1.1%	262	
Statewide Total	5,474 79.6%	1,107 16.1%	311 4.5%	3,164 46.0%	3,728 54.2%	2,425 35.3%	2,519 36.6%	1,418 20.6%	56 0.8%	228 3.3%	12 0.2%	263 3.8%	6,877 3.8%	

Source: CommCorp analysis of MOSES data maintained by Division of Career Services.

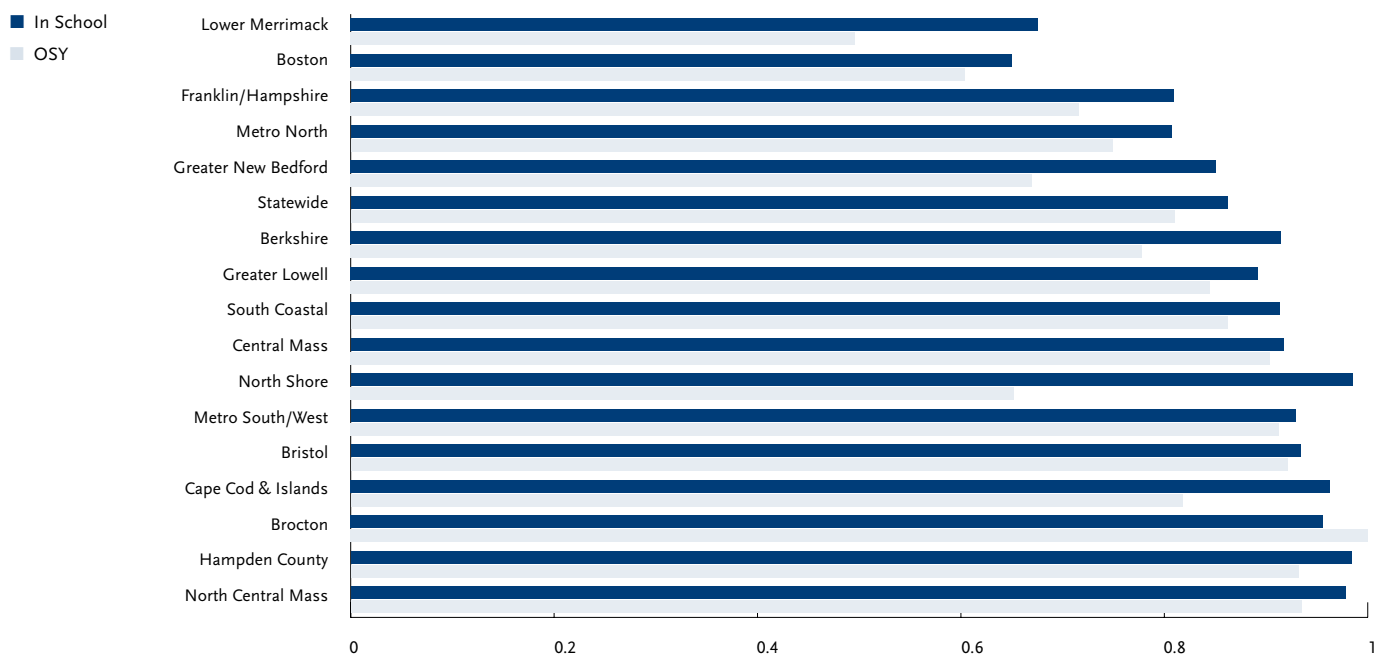
programs were operating smoothly—in the face of the several administrative challenges. One of the many activities that CommCorp staff undertook was to speak with youth directly, in order to document program experience and the level of general satisfaction youth had with their jobs.

About 510 youth completed CommCorp's survey of summer jobs participants—amounting to 7 percent of all youth who were employed through WIA, ARRA, or YouthWorks this summer.⁷ The survey sample was not designed with a statistically valid sample. Rather, CommCorp staff asked youth to complete the form when we visited them as part of our summer quality assurance visits. In addition, we gave copies of survey instruments to program managers and asked them to have youth complete the forms and return it to our office for analysis. We wanted to get a quick snapshot of how youth were responding to the summer job, and whether they were experiencing any problems with their job, the placement, or their supervisors.

Youth reported having a very positive experience with their employment. Key findings included:

- ▶ **ABOUT 80 PERCENT OF RESPONDENTS WERE UNDER THE AGE OF 18. FIVE PERCENT OF THE TOTAL WERE BETWEEN THE AGES OF 22 AND 24—A NEW GROUP INCLUDED IN THE SUMMER JOBS PROGRAM FOR THE FIRST TIME IN 2009.** This profile generally matches our experience with youth employment during previous summers. We did detect a somewhat higher percentage of youth who were older than age eighteen, which makes sense because program officials purposely sought during recent years to expand services to older, out-of-school youth.
- ▶ **JUST UNDER 70 PERCENT OF RESPONDENTS WERE CURRENTLY ENROLLED IN HIGH SCHOOL.** About 17 percent had already graduated from high school but were not enrolled in postsecondary education. Five percent were high school dropouts, and nine percent were either in college or had already graduated from college. We were surprised with the percentage of youth participants who were enrolled or who had already graduated from college. This may be a new cohort of participants—and confirmed some anecdotal information that communities were experiencing an increase in the number of youth applicants who were in college. Normally, this group is not what anyone would expect to qualify for programs targeted at higher risk youth. However, all youth who obtained jobs this summer qualified for the program both because of their family income level and because they faced at least one barrier (e.g., low basic skills, homeless, foster youth, etc.). And we know from other labor market data that all youth, including those who are over the age of 18, are experiencing significant difficulty in finding work—given the weak economy and a huge drop in youth employment within the private sector over the past decade.
- ▶ **41 PERCENT OF YOUTH REPORTED THIS SUMMER JOB WAS THEIR FIRST JOB.** Given that just over 80 percent of youth were under the age of 18, this result is not all that surprising—younger youth will naturally be less experienced with employment.

Figure One—Massachusetts SYEP Performance Outcomes by Region



⁷ CommCorp reported the full survey results in *Voices from the Field: A Report of Responses to a Survey of Participants in the 2009 Youth Summer Jobs Program*, Commonwealth Corporation, November 4, 2009.

CAREER READINESS SKILLS	WORK ETHIC & PROFESSIONALISM	COMMUNICATION & INTERPERSONAL SKILLS
World-of-work awareness	Attendance and punctuality	Speaking
Labor market knowledge	Workplace appearance	Listening
Occupational information	Accepting direction and constructive criticism	Interacting with co-workers
Values clarification and personal understanding	Motivation and taking initiative	
Career planning and decision making	Understanding workplace culture, policy and safety	
Job search techniques (resumes, interviews, applications, and follow-up letters)		
Survival/daily living skills		

We tabulated the data by age of youth and confirmed this experience differential (*see Table Six*). 67 percent of youth aged 14–15 were first-time workers, compared with 44 percent of youth aged 16–18, 14 percent of 19–21 year-olds, and only 9 percent of those 22 years and over.

- ▶ 89 PERCENT OF YOUTH REPORTED THAT THEY WANT TO WORK DURING THE SCHOOL YEAR, BUT ONLY 18 PERCENT ALREADY HAD A JOB LINED UP. These results show the human impact of the dramatic changes in the youth job market over the past two decades. A very high percentage of youth want to work during the school year, regardless of age. But actual employment is harder and harder to come by. The youth job market has declined significantly, and fewer youth are able to find that all-important first job that helps build an experience base for later employment. The fact that only 18 percent of respondents had already lined up a job for the fall suggests the growing importance of year-round subsidized employment programs and other policies that organize access to jobs for youth who are pushed out of the labor market by older workers. Disaggregated by age of youth participant the older youth were more likely to report that they already have a job lined up for the school year (*see Table Seven*). 27 percent of youth aged 19–21 reported having a job identified, compared with about 10 percent of the youngest youth.
- ▶ YOUTH WERE MADE AWARE OF THE SUMMER PROGRAM THROUGH A RELATIVELY SMALL NUMBER OF RECRUITMENT METHODS. Thirty-four percent of youth surveyed heard about

the availability of summer jobs through their school. Another 24 percent heard from a friend and 16 percent through their parent. Relatively few youth (2 percent or fewer) learned about the program through flyers, advertisements or other general means. Additional methods that helped some youth were career specialists, case workers or outreach workers. These results suggest both that program sponsors should deploy a variety of methods to recruit youth, since no one method dominated the list. On the other hand, based on our conversations with local program operators, it also seems clear that the strongest results come through places where youth are already connected – schools, case workers and outreach workers. And word of mouth, through friends and parents, appears useful.

- ▶ YOUTH WORKED IN A WIDE VARIETY OF JOBS IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR, PRIVATE SECTOR, IN NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS, AND THROUGH YOUTH PROGRAMS (for example, jobs provided through the Boys and Girls Club, New England Farmworkers Council, Youth Build, etc.). The majority of respondents worked in jobs that were typical of past youth programs—office work, child care, summer camp counselor, public sector landscape and park beautification, general maintenance and custodial placements. In general, we saw a relatively higher dependence for employment slots provided by existing youth programs than individual placements in the private sector or in non-profit organizations than happened in the past. We believe that this may result from a combination of factors, including (a) the need for program operators to quickly ramp

up overall operations, which favors group placements over the identification of individual or one-per-employer work slots; and (b) the continuing trend away from employment in jobs that are traditionally thought of as ‘youth’ jobs (because such jobs are being taken by adults), with the result that more youth are now being paid to perform community service and similar support functions than has been true in the past. This trend, if true, underscores the need to ensure that community service employment includes the rigor and level of productivity necessary to ensure a quality work experience.

- ▶ **YOUTH PARTICIPANTS REPORTED HIGH LEVELS OF SATISFACTION WITH THEIR SUMMER EXPERIENCE.** 91 percent of youth rated their summer job experience as either “good” or “excellent.” Only one youth thought his/her job was “awful.” Interestingly enough, youth of all ages reported a high degree of overall satisfaction. Almost 90 percent of the oldest youth reported overall satisfaction, compared with about 92 percent of younger youth. Table Four presents the overall ratings separated into youth for whom the summer job was their first job. Those youth with any prior work experience uniformly reported higher overall satisfaction than those who were working for the first time (*Table Eight—see page 16*).
- ▶ **YOUTH SURVEYED RATED THEIR SUPERVISORS VERY HIGH, AND ALSO REPORTED GETTING GOOD FEEDBACK, AND FEELING SUPPORTED.** Ninety-two percent of youth rated their relationship

with their supervisor as either “good” or “excellent.” Only one youth thought his/her supervisor was “awful,” and two youth had not met their supervisor at the time of the site visit. Ninety-four percent reported their supervisor tells them how well they are doing. Ninety-seven percent reported getting necessary support from a worksite supervisor. Ninety-three percent reported that there is always someone else designated as ‘in charge’ when the worksite supervisor is not available.

- ▶ **YOUTH REPORTED PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRAINING AND ORIENTATION, BUT LIKELY NOT AS MUCH AS PROBABLY TOOK PLACE.** Sixty-three percent of youth reported participating in job readiness training, 57 percent in job safety training, and 32 percent reported having training in child labor laws. Based on other program documentation and interviews that CommCorp staff completed, we believe that a much higher percentage of summer youth actually received training in job readiness and job safety. It may be likely that some youth were not aware of the nature of training that was provided, or that it may have been too obscure or not well identified. We recommend that program officials in future summer programs make much more explicit the training and orientation sessions that are provided to youth, to ensure that appropriate learning actually happens.
- ▶ **MOST YOUTH EXPERIENCED A COMBINATION OF WORK AND LEARNING IN THEIR SUMMER JOB.** Sixty-two percent of youth reported participating in classroom-based learning activities

Table Six. 2009 SYEP Youth Participant Totals by Age Reporting First Job

RESPONDENT AGE	YES, FIRST JOB		NOT FIRST JOB		TOTAL	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
14–15	63	67	31	33	94	100
16–18	126	44	162	56	288	100
19–21	10	14	70	86	80	100
22–24	2	9	20	91	22	100
Total	201		283		484	

Table Seven. 2009 SYEP Youth Participant Totals by Age Reporting Having a Job Lined Up For Fall

AGE COHORT	YES, JOB LINED UP		NO JOB LINED UP		TOTAL	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
14–15	7	9.5	67	90.4	74	100
16–18	45	17.0	217	83.0	262	100
19–21	20	27.0	55	73.0	75	100
22–24	2	11.7	15	88.3	17	100
Total	74		355		429	

in addition to employment, and 32 percent received formal academic instruction as a part of the summer program.

▶ **YOUTH REPORTED MANY POSITIVE THINGS THAT THEY APPRECIATED ABOUT THEIR SUMMER JOB.** Beyond simply having income, youth cited a variety of reasons, including:

- *Enjoying the kinds of work tasks and assignments, including working with other youth;*
- *Gaining experience for future jobs and employment;*
- *Providing support for the community; and*
- *Building new relationships with adults, customers, other employees and work supervisors.*

▶ **YOUTH REPORTED RELATIVELY MINOR DISLIKES ABOUT THEIR JOB.** MANY OF THE DISLIKES FOCUSED ON THE WORK ENVIRONMENT, ESPECIALLY WORKING IN THE HOT SUN OR IN A HOT ROOM. Some youth complained about other youth who did not work hard enough, or that work was too boring, or having to get up too early in the morning. A few youth noted a lack of organization at some worksites. Most, though, made no sharply negative comments—and appeared overwhelmingly satisfied with the program.

▶ **YOUTH MADE SEVERAL SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVING THE SUMMER PROGRAM.** Although we noted several suggestions for specific work changes, most of the comments sought longer programs—more weeks, longer hours, more pay, more jobs, more students, employment that lasts through the school year, and some assurance that the program will be available next summer.

Our conversations with participating youth made clear the summer job was more than just a way to make money. Earning a wage was clearly a primary motivation, but youth were motivated

in other ways—gaining skills or experience, being part of something bigger than themselves, contributing to the community, taking pride in their work, and being praised for their efforts. Some of the many comments youth made include:

- “Being able to give back to my community.”
- “Actually feeling good about myself. Doing something positive.”
- “Knowing that this job is going to make me into a better person.”
- “Positive, motivational atmosphere.”
- “Just by people coming by talking to us about how much of a good job we are doing, that makes us feel, like we are really getting our job done. People actually recognize the work instead of just driving by. They actually stopped and congratulate us about the job we’re doing.”
- “I learned to be more patient.”
- “Be considerate.”
- “You have to work on something step by step.”
- “I learned how to stay calm when things got pressure, like when there were big lines.”
- “It taught me to be more professional.”
- “I think we gained a lot of respect and I think we gave a lot of respect.”
- “Maybe it will be a little bit easier to get a job now that we have the experience in something. Now that we have a couple of certifications and experience, maybe now we might get a job.”
- “I definitely would like to see this come back next summer.”

Table Eight. 2009 SYEP Youth Participant Totals by Age Reporting Having a Job Lined Up

OVERALL RATING	YES, THIS IS FIRST JOB		NO, THIS IS NOT FIRST JOB		TOTAL	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Excellent	107	41	156	59	263	100
Good	76	44	98	56	174	100
Fair	18	43	24	57	42	100
Awful	1		0		1	100
Total	203		283		486	



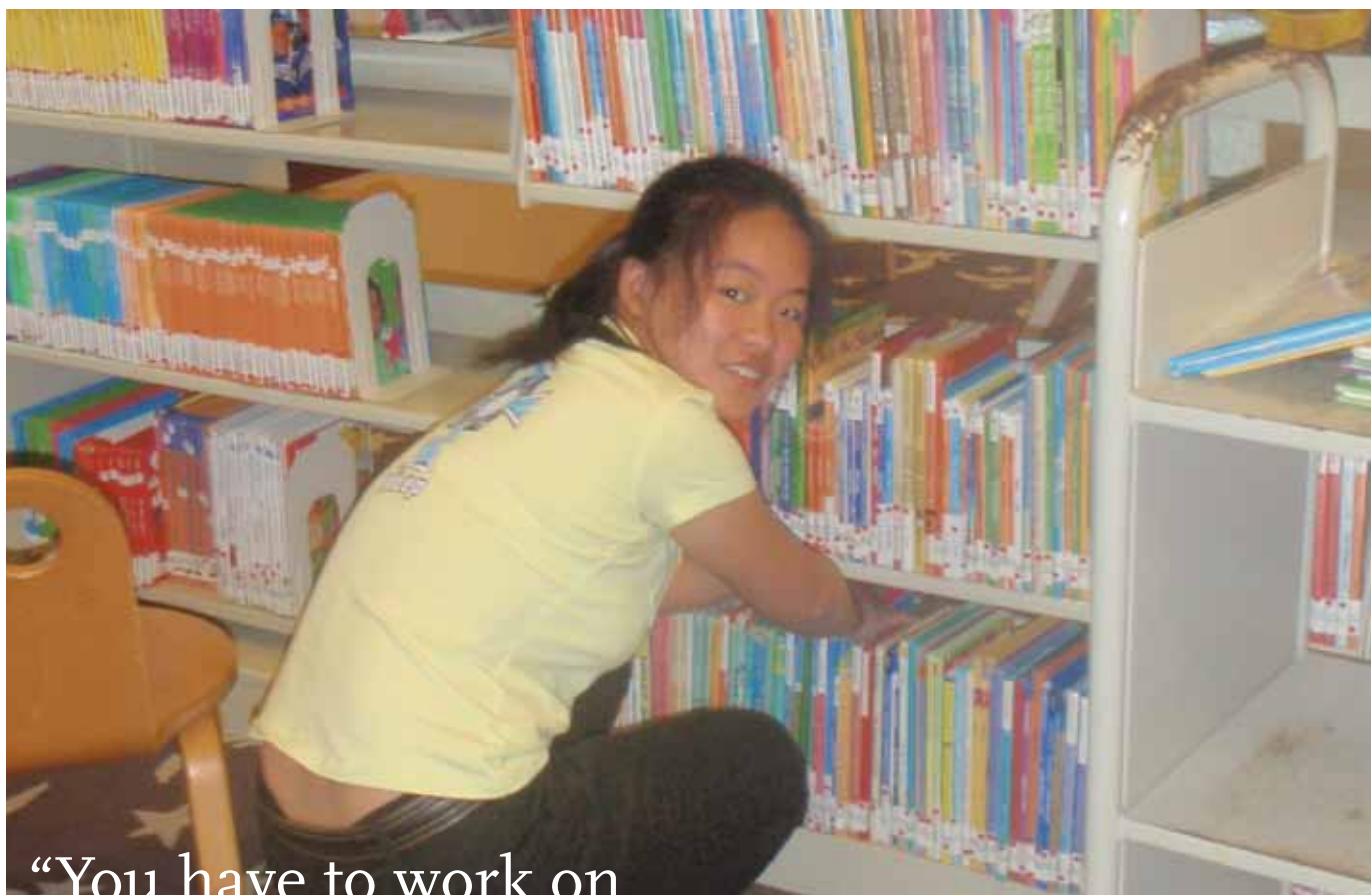
“Just by people coming by and talking to us about how much of a good job we are doing,

that makes us feel, like we are really getting our job done”

—A youth participant

BAWIB, Whitman-Hanson Regional High School

Using the Summer of Work and Learning Model, an ARRA funded program operated at Whitman-Hanson High School during the summer of 2009. This program targeted youth who were pregnant or parenting, court involved or had mental health issues and who needed credit recovery. The program was supported by three guidance staff who were available to help the participants throughout the day. The youth were bused to school in the morning and started the day with a free breakfast at 7:30 a.m. with the teachers and counselors. The youth were often dealing with issues that needed immediate attention and they had the opportunity to talk with the counselors during breakfast before attending classes. According to the Program Director Brian Scully, this counseling by guidance staff and mentoring by teachers was vital to the success of the program. The infrastructure of Whitman-Hanson Regional High School was used to provide the educational component. Whitman-Hanson Regional High School gave the youth free tuition for summer school and educational support. The youth attended summer school from 9:00 to noon. During the afternoon, the youth worked as employees of the school and held custodial and maintenance positions. They mulched, weeded and raked at four different schools in the area under the direction of a site supervisor. The Mass WBLP was used to document the work readiness skills the youth attained. At the end of the program, the youth participants either returned to the high school or graduated. The youth who graduated enrolled at Massasoit Community College.



“You have to work on
something step by step”

—A youth participant

Quincy Asian Resources, Quincy, Massachusetts

Enhancing English proficiency and work readiness for 38 youth, aged 16 to 23, whose native language is Mandarin, Cantonese, Vietnamese and Spanish is the goal of this summer job program funded through ARRA. A typical program week consisted of 5–10 hours of classes and 15–20 hours of work experience. In the classroom, the curriculum centered on English in work environments and was taught by Quincy School Department teachers. Job placements were individualized, based on each participant’s English language skill levels. Some youth were placed in positions in the community – including the YMCA, Quincy Medical Center, Thomas Crane Library and local dentist offices. Other youth were employed at Quincy Asian Resource’s computer lab work site, where they translate, enter data, update the website and blog. The youth in this summer job program reported that it helped improve their English language proficiency and help the youth feel more comfortable in their community.



Readiness Checklist

“That thing you got going (the summer jobs program), let’s keep it that way.”

—A youth participant

READINESS CHECKLIST FOR SUMMER YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

The following checklist was developed by staff at Commonwealth Corporation for use by local program operators in preparing for a summer youth employment program. Staff worked with local programs, subcontractors, employers, and youth across the Commonwealth during the Summer of 2009 and identified some core steps and activities that need to be addressed in designing, launching, and managing an employment program. We offer this checklist for use in 2010 and beyond, and invite your feedback so we can improve the list further and help ensure a positive work placement for all youth.

A. Core Structural Considerations for LWIBs

Primary theme for this component: LWIB (or its Youth Council) must select an approach to overall program structure and operations, to ensure efficient, equitable management of SYEP

- ☐ Decide whether to deliver program through LWIB's fiscal agent or through competitively procured vendors.
- ☐ Define role of one-stop career center(s)—e.g., recruitment of youth, enroll SYEP youth as career center members, etc.
- ☐ Establish size of SYEP program budget—counting and braiding all available federal, state and local resources.
- ☐ Develop, submit and approve the LWIB business plan for SYEP.
- ☐ Decide on performance goals and levels for program, especially for performance measures that are discretionary or require local action (e.g., methods for setting and documenting work readiness skill attainment for participating youth).

B. Program Design Options

Primary theme for this component: LWIB must establish priorities and goals for the youth program that will be executed by the SYEP program operator(s). Goals must clearly reflect the exercise of choices such as:

- ☐ In-school youth vs. out-of-school youth.
- ☐ Public sector vs. private sector jobs.
- ☐ SYEP as stand-alone employment vs. coordinated with other youth services.
- ☐ Design of work and learning models (work-based learning, academic enrichment, ESOL, GED, etc).
- ☐ SYEP and connection with year-round (post-summer) employment and youth services.
- ☐ Establishing industry sector priorities that target youth for jobs that are in demand.
- ☐ Work experience vs. service learning.
- ☐ Partnerships to support state custody youth (foster care, juvenile justice, TANF, youth with disabilities).
- ☐ Green jobs or other key emerging sectors.

C. Procurement and Subcontracting

Primary theme for this component: The LWIB should establish a procurement timeline that maps backwards from the date program operations need to start in order to ensure youth vendors are staffed and ready to implement an SYEP program. The timeline should establish deadlines and responsibilities for:

- ☐ Development of RFP.
- ☐ Issuance of RFP.
- ☐ Publishing notice of RFP in local newspapers and other required venues.
- ☐ Holding bidders conference, ensuring clear communications with prospective vendors regarding clarity on program priorities, designs, and goals.
- ☐ Scoring and reviewing proposals, and recommending approval of finalists by Youth Council.
- ☐ Final negotiations with elected vendor(s).
- ☐ Signature and approval of subcontracts by LWIB.

D. Public Education

Primary theme for this component: Use of communications media to educate the public about the availability of SYEP, promote marketing of employers and youth, for publicity during SYEP operations, and to highlight end-of-summer celebrations. Program operators should have plans for:

- ☐ Press events to announce the SYEP.
- ☐ Press conference to launch employer recruiting.
- ☐ Flyers and posters targeting youth are placed at schools, youth organizations, other youth-serving partner agencies.
- ☐ Program operator has made use of Internet outreach, including a local SYEP website, Twitter and Facebook postings.
- ☐ Press event to launch summer program.
- ☐ Press event to gain publicity for program during summer.
- ☐ Press and public events to close and celebrate summer program.
- ☐ Permission forms for media profiles and publicity are executed by youth and parents.

E. Employer Recruiting

Primary theme for this component: Program operator(s) manage an aggressive campaign to recruit employers to provide work experience for SYEP youth. Employer expectations are clear, job descriptions are created, and worksite supervision is well-defined.

- ☐ General community and employer education activities are designed.
- ☐ Strategy for employer outreach is defined.
- ☐ Employer recruiting tools are produced and distributed.
- ☐ Worksite application form/MOU is produced and ready for use.
- ☐ Job development function is staffed by program operator(s).
- ☐ Program operator develops a process for managing employer data, especially worksite openings.
- ☐ Outreach to specific employers, including large employers, past employers, employers in key industry sectors, etc.
- ☐ Employer events are scheduled (employer breakfast, Chamber lunch, service club luncheons).
- ☐ Direct mail, e-mail and other communication strategies are planned and executed.
- ☐ Process exists for identifying and training worksite supervisors once employer sites are selected.
- ☐ Training is provided to employers in use of MWBLP.

F. Youth Recruiting

Primary theme for this component: Program operator(s) recruit youth in sufficient numbers to meet the goals of the program as defined by the LWIB. Expectations of youths and parents for eligibility documentation are clearly communicated.

- ☐ Plans are designed for general community and youth education and outreach.
- ☐ Program operator(s) coordinate with youth-serving institutions where eligible youth may already be receiving services—i.e., schools, youth-serving organizations, public agencies, including DYS, DCF, DTA, MRC.
- ☐ MOUs and referral process with partners are clear and finalized.
- ☐ Comprehensive application/intake forms (both hard copy and on-line) are prepared and distributed at key locations in community.
- ☐ Tools and forms are available in multiple languages.
- ☐ Requirements for parental approval are clear.
- ☐ Program operator(s) have deployed sufficient staff as outreach workers in targeted neighborhoods and locales.
- ☐ Conduct annual job fair (employers and program managers help recruit youth).

G. Eligibility Processing

Primary theme for this component: Program operator(s) are efficiently managing the flow of information and documentation such that youth eligibility will be determined in advance of the projected start date for employment.

- ☐ Comprehensive application/intake forms (both hard copy and on-line) are prepared and distributed at key locations in community.
- ☐ Tools and forms are available in multiple languages.
- ☐ Requirements for parental approval are clear.
- ☐ File system is prepared for managing paper flow of documentation.
- ☐ Sufficient staff are assigned to process eligibility documentation.
- ☐ Staff are trained in eligibility and documentation policy, know how to review folders, and understand how to request missing documentation.
- ☐ Work permit process is clear and coordinated with local schools.
- ☐ Policies and protocols for administering CORI checks (when necessary) are clear.

H. Pre-employment preparation

Primary theme for this component: Program operator(s) work with participating youth to prepare them to begin their summer work experience. Work readiness training, safety training and other topics are covered that help youth learn transferable readiness skills that will help them in any job.

- ☐ Programs decide final training topics (e.g., health and safety training, self-advocacy, work-readiness, financial literacy, career guidance, life skills).
- ☐ Each training component has clear curriculum, assessment, teacher/trainer, scheduled meeting space, notice to youth participants.
- ☐ Pre-employment training assessment process is executed.
- ☐ Process for reporting and documenting skill assessment (entry into database).
- ☐ Worksite supervisor orientation and training.
- ☐ Staff at program organization(s) are hired and trained.
- ☐ MWBLP training for youth, employers and staff.
- ☐ Employer training and orientation is delivered and made available on-line.

I. Program Operations

Primary theme for this component: Key elements of program operations are designed and ready.

- ☐ Process exists for matching youth to available jobs.
- ☐ Process for communicating worksite placement to participating youth.
- ☐ Youth orientation materials and produced and ready to use-rules, emergency contact information, payroll forms (W-4 and I-9), how to read paychecks.
- ☐ Support services menu and policy.
- ☐ MWBLP assessment.
- ☐ New staff orientation and training is prepared and delivered.
- ☐ Process for reporting and responding to worksite violations or youth incidents.
- ☐ Workers compensation issues are clear and coverage established.
- ☐ Liability insurance issues are clear and coverage established.
- ☐ Youth grievance procedures are clear.
- ☐ Interview protocol for youth intake is finalized.
- ☐ Process for writing and signing worksite agreements is established.

J. Payroll Operations

Primary theme for this component: Program operator(s) have designed a payroll system that can process timesheets and timely prepare and distribute paychecks to participating youth, and report wages through W-2 and other state and federal tax reporting requirements.

- ☐ Decision on handing payroll in-house vs. at vendor site.
- ☐ Decision on subcontracting payroll to third-party payroll agent.
- ☐ Timesheet forms are finalized and are uniform across vendors and worksites.
- ☐ Payroll process and deadlines are established.
- ☐ Data entry for payroll and accounts payable is established.
- ☐ Process for distributing checks or debit cards to youth is finalized.
- ☐ Subcontractors and vendors are trained on actions needed to support payroll.
- ☐ Aggregate payroll data is provided to fiscal agent in form and detail sufficient to create an invoice to funding entity.
- ☐ Federal and state wage reporting is executed.

K. Data and Reporting

Primary theme for this component: Program operator(s) capture and timely enter participant data using appropriate reporting database to meet state and federal reporting expectations.

- ☐ Clarity on data elements that will be reported.
- ☐ Clarity on database that will be used for youth records.
- ☐ Clarity on how required program data will be collected – e.g., intake and application forms, etc.
- ☐ Data entry personnel are designated and trained in database operations.
- ☐ Define a process and ensure accountability for timely reporting of data to state and federal officials.
- ☐ Procedures and protocols are in place for ensuring data security and confidentiality for both hard copy files and electronic storage.

L. Program oversight and monitoring

Primary theme for this component: Program operator(s) designate staff to regularly review all worksites during the summer program, to ensure worksites are safe, provide good supervision, and that the work experience is of high quality. Program operators must exercise fiscal and program oversight over subcontractor, and the LWIBs must oversee the work of its own fiscal agent.

- ☐ Process is defined for worksite review.
- ☐ Process is defined for program monitoring.
- ☐ Process is defined for fiscal monitoring of program operators and subcontractor(s).
- ☐ Staff are trained and assigned to perform worksite monitoring.
- ☐ Schedule and tools are finalized for worksite monitoring.
- ☐ Process exists to review data from worksite monitoring.
- ☐ LWIB and/ program operator develops and follows a corrective action process with employers, subcontractors, or program operators, as necessary.

M. Program Quality Review

Primary theme for this component: LWIB and program operators collect quantitative and qualitative information from youth and employers, parents and program partners to identify issues and improve program practices in future SYEP programs.

- ☐ Youth satisfaction survey instrument and process is finalized.
- ☐ Employer satisfaction survey instruments and process is finalized.
- ☐ Staff assignments are made to support administration of surveys and collection and analysis of results.



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